2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
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The omissions from the "in-law" category are equally important from the woman's point of view. She does not call her husband's parents *ewa*, but addresses them as though they were her own grandparents; she treats them with respect, kneels when she hands anything to her father-in-law, and turns her head away when she speaks, but there is no strict avoidance. One of our married informants had his mother living with him; she had a separate hut in his enclosure, but she and his wife could eat together if they wished.

A man calls his son's wife *kwaro*, grandchild; she falls into the category of wives of a clansman with whom sexual intercourse is inadmissible, and no doubt the ceremonial behaviour observed between grandchildren and grandparents is also followed between a man and his son's wife. It has been noted before that a woman uses terms to her husband's relatives that she would use to her own relatives of a generation older, and the custom of consorting with the husband's son and being inherited by him has been suggested as a reason for this.

We have seen that there are certain other women who are treated in the same ceremonial manner as are the *ewa*; these are wives of relatives, some, but not all, of whom are clansmen (see p. 61). These women fall into sharp contrast with those other women (wives of clansmen, the *wu* and the *awu*) with whom connection is permitted during the life of the husband and who may possibly be inherited after his death.

Young people are free to marry the partner of their choice so long as clan exogamy is observed and no genealogical relationship can be traced on the mother's side. Every Shilluk youth is interested in the marriage of his sister and of his father's sister's daughter, for he receives cattle from their bride-wealth and without cattle he cannot himself marry; it is true that his father and his father's sister will assist him to collect cattle for his bride-wealth, but how can they get these except from the marriage of their daughters? A father who used his cattle to marry extra wives while his own sons remained unmarried would be regarded generally with disfavour. The breaking of a marriage—divorce—means the return of cattle to the bridegroom, a difficult matter, as though the bride-wealth is paid to one man, the bride's father or brother, it is immediately distributed and may soon play its part in another's marriage. Thus a man has every reason to desire his sister's marriage to be stable. Yet, in the rules of behaviour that are customary between persons

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
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The *dhak nuaw* consists of any number of sheep, from seven upwards, and these are taken by the bride's brother (*wuia*). If the bride has no full brother they are divided amongst her *awa*, her father's brother's sons, and after them her *awa* who are her clansmen. 583

The *jaw nuaw* consists of four hoes, two fish spears, four spears (two large and two small), a basketful of tobacco and a bundle of firewood. The *jaw nuaw* is kept by the parents and is not shared with other relatives.

In times of stress, as during the *makdia* or when cattle have been scarce for any other reason, whole or part of the bride-wealth may be deferred. The debt is not, however, cancelled; the husband may frequently wait until he receives bride-wealth for a daughter of the marriage, when he will give the original number of cattle agreed for his wife to her father or his next of kin.

If a married woman dies without leaving a child, the husband demands back the cattle of the bride-wealth from the father. If his wife leaves him he will demand both the sheep and the hoes and spears; the tobacco and fish are gone, so he will not ask for them, but if he were very angry he might even do that, though such behaviour would generally be despised. Yangjok, a chief of Tonga, stated in court that if a woman leaves her husband all the bride-wealth should be returned except one bullock, but if the wife is pregnant when she leaves the husband one cow and one bull are kept by her people. 586 [626]

It seems that, on the whole, divorce is amicably arranged, as a man usually only seeks divorce if his wife has left him for another man, in which case the latter would have to hand over bride-wealth to her father, who would return the original bride-wealth to the first husband. If, however, there were another daughter of suitable age the husband might take her. If a man should try to return his wife because she was barren a more difficult situation would arise.[1] Such a case would probably be taken before the *reath* and judgment might be given that all except two cows should be returned. Probably before the case came up the husband would have tried to steal the cows from his father-in-law. 586 587 586

A case was recorded of a girl who was betrothed as a child to a man who contracted venereal disease. One cow of the bride-wealth 584

[1] Hofmayr states that before deciding that a woman is barren the husband would let her cohabit with one of his *awa*, and the *ajwogo* would also be called in to administer medicine (*op. cit.*, 196). [842]

When a man dies, and he has children, his property
114 is taken by the eldest *Social Institutions*

*539 428 578 593 626 son; the younger son (or sons) remains without anything. All the cattle too are taken by the eldest son; and if the eldest son is good, he divides the cattle between himself and his brothers, but if he is bad, he keeps all the cattle for himself. In this case they fight, and the cattle is taken away (by force) by the younger brother (or brothers). But then all the people come, and they talk about the matter, and they say (to the younger brothers) thus: "Why, your elder brother, he refused to give you cattle, and now you want to keep it all? What for? If later on any debts (which your father may have contracted or which may fall on you) appear, you being his sole heir, will have to pay all; so the people divide the cattle; the elder brother gets his part, and the younger one gets his part. After that they again hold a big palaver, and they make friends; water is poured on the ground, and so they are reconciled. The eldest son gets many cows (or property), because he is the chief of the family, the younger one does not get so much. And if afterwards any debts are to be paid, the elder one will pay them, the younger remaining free. The younger brother marries a wife with his cattle; that is all, thus the matter is settled.

*539 587 768 611 The wives of the dead man are treated (done with) thus: the elder brother of the dead man comes and takes one, and the younger brother also comes and takes one.[1] And if they beget children from these wives, they belong to the family of the dead man; they are (like) his (own) children (they live in the house of the eldest brother.) The eldest wife of the deceased, the mother of the children, remains with the eldest brother. — So is it exactly.

18. Murder.

*539 *Ŋẽŋ ŋpà, ywódá, ŋ bŋ wjà, ka ŋjì, ka chjíj lòlj, ka ámn gwí ɔ rjíj, ka bíŋ bŋ kwɔ́p: yá ŋɔ́kɔ gíŋ ɔ wɔr! Ká bòl gɔ́ch, ka tjɛ́ŋ bíŋ wjé, ka tyɛ́ɛ ɔ mɔn kɛ́ɛ bŋ yɛ́kí jam, yɛ kám. Ka tyɛ́kɛ́ líŋɔ, lɛ́ɛ rjíj; ka fɔ́ch yɛ́k, gyɛ́ɛ mɔ́k, ka lyɛ́ŋ ŋjì. Ka tjɛ́ŋ líŋɔ, ɡɔ́k ɔ ŋjì fíɛ́ɛ Jɔ́k. Ka wí ɣ dɔ́k lɛ́ɛr rjíj, ká ɡɔ́k dúŋk. Ka ɡɔ́k ɛrɣɛ́ɛ gɔ́é yí jíŋɛ́ɣ, ka mɔ́jɛ rjíj, ka rjíj ɔ wɛ́rɛ̀, ká ɛ̀ kì: kɛ́ɣ, chɛ́l! Ka tjɛ́ŋ chɔ́dj, ka mɛ́ɛ ɔ kíɛ́ŋ ɡɔ́nɛ́, ka mɛ́ɛ ɔ kíɛ́ŋ ɡɔ́nɛ́, ka ɡɔ́k ɔ tlɔ́ɔ̀, ɡɛ́ ɣɣɛ́ɛ́ɣ. Ka chɛ́ɛ́k wɛ́ɛ́r, ka ɔ líŋɔ, ka bíŋ yí jíŋɛ́ɣ, kíɛ́ɛ: kwɛ́ɛ́p lɔ́dɔ́ dì? Kíɛ́ɛ: kwɛ́ɛ́f á ɣíɛ́m. Ka ɡɔ́k kɛ́ɛl, ka ɣɛ́ tjɛ́r, ka ɣɛ́ mɔ́jɛ kí dɣɛ́k, mɛ́ɛ́ kwɔ́ɔ́k tyɛ́ɛ́ rjíj. Ka tyɛ́ɛ́ rjíj yíɛ́ɛ́ɔ́, kíɛ́ɛ: gíŋ ɛ́ɛ́ɔ́k! Ka nɔ́kɛ́ kí ɡɔ́nɛ́ mɔ́kɛ, ka ɡɔ́k kɛ́ɛl, ka tyɛ́ɛ́ rjíj ɔ líŋɔ, kɛ́ɛ́ɔ Fɔ́ɔ́kɔ́dɛ́ kí tyɛ́ɛ́ gíŋ, tyɛ́ɛ́ gíɛ́ɛ́ gíɛ́ɛ́ ɡɔ́k ɔ́bɔ́ɔ́k. Ka rjíj kɛ́ɛ́ɣ ɡɔ́k ɔ́bɔ́ɔ́k, wɛ́ɛ́ ɔ́kɣɛ́ɛ́ yɛ́ɛ́ɔ́ nɔ́l ɡɛ́ɛ́l.

*539 682 A man hides in an ambush; when he perceives his adversary, he comes out and stabs him, and he stabs him a second time. Then this man (the murderer) runs away home, and comes to tell the people of his village: "I have killed a man last night." Then the drum is beaten, the people come out from their houses, and

[1] The sons marry their father's wives, but not their own mother.

having a great number of local branches, or lineages, spread throughout Shillukland, and there are no periodic reunions.

Members of a lineage are bound not only by kinship ties but also by ties arising through occupation of the same territory. The lineage is an effective political and social unit. A person generally thinks in terms of his localised lineage and refers most often to the founder of his lineage in the district occupied. In relation to members of lineages of other clans, however, reference is most likely to be made to the founding ancestor of a person's clan. As previously mentioned, the occupants of a settlement belong to a collection of independent lineages which graft themselves onto the genealogical structure of the dominant lineage through marriage with its female members.

INHERITANCE

Only the smallest lineage unit is of any importance in the inheritance of property. Pumphrey states that there are no definite rules for the inheritance of chattels.(1) If distribution has not been made before death they are usually taken by the eldest son, or by the next of kin where there are no sons. Cattle are taken by the succeeding *gol kwaber*, either a married son or a married brother. He cannot do exactly as he likes with them for he inherits certain traditional obligations. He has the moral obligation to use his herds for providing bridewealth to enable the male members of the *gol* to marry, in order of seniority, and it is considered wrong for a *gol kwaber* to marry a second time himself while there are men of his *gol* still unmarried and requiring cattle. The *gol kwaber* is also responsible for paying compensation in cattle for any wrong which has been committed by one of his household. Finally, it is recognised that no cattle of the family herds should be sold except in times of famine and to purchase grain. Pumphrey states that a breach of these terms of trust would "be universally censured but would probably not be interfered with by the courts."(2)

Uncultivated land belongs to anyone who settles on it.

MARRIAGE

The Shilluk are polygynous; a wealthy and influential man has three or four wives, while members of the fourth may have several more. Marriage is forbidden with any member of one's father's clan and between all persons in respect of whom relationship, either through the father or mother, could be traced directly. Apart from these obstacles it appears that freedom of choice is generally allowed to both sexes in matrimonial matters.

Bridewealth

Bridewealth consists of ten head of cattle and sheep and spears. In addition the suitor makes small gifts and performs services to win the favour of his future father- and mother-in-law. Bridewealth discussions and arguments proceed between representatives appointed by the suitor's *gol* and by the girl's *gol*.

(1) Pumphrey, S.S.S. 1941, Vol.XXIV, p.24.
(2) Ibid., p.23.

9:Howell E-5 (1937-1950) 1952 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

described as feuds, for they amount to civil war; the latter are usually so quickly composed that the feud is soon over. The ultimate aim of the first is successful deposition of the monarch by one side or his retention by the other, and there is evidence of a traditional, almost institutionalized, opposition between the north and south.[1] In the latter form of hostilities the desire for peaceful composition after an outbreak of violence or an act of homicide was presumably fostered by expediency, for within so compact and densely populated a territorial unit the continuance of a feud would be intolerable.[2] Local lineages within a settlement are sufficiently united by common interests in economic activities, by marital ties, and above all in common defence against aggression from other settlements, that these sanctions were, and indeed still are, particularly effective. These distinctions are important, for not only are feuds between adjacent settlements often fiercely sustained, as we have seen, but it is at this level of internal disruption that the intervention of the *reth* is most obvious, if we are to accept the evidence of recorded instances. This is true whether we take the view that in the past, before Government influences were effective, the king's intervention took the form of arbitration demanded by the participants, or whether we take the opposite view that he took repressive or even legal action as the head of an organized State.

In the case of civil war over the tenure of the monarchy itself, the *reth* was the leading participant defending his personal position against a rival. Action against him was *ultra vires*, though this was no longer true as soon as his rival was established on the throne. In the case of hostilities within a settlement, the sanctions were probably sufficiently forceful to secure amicable composition without either external arbitration or repression. We must, therefore, consider homicide in the context of inter-settlement feuds in which, as we shall see, the *reth* was more particularly involved in the rôle of peacemaker. It will then be necessary to consider the more individual aspects of the laws of homicide.

The Reth's Rôle in the Composition of Inter-settlement Feuds

On this subject the Seligmans say:

> As the fountain of justice, the king kept for himself by far the greater part of the fines for homicide and other grave offences. The fine for man-killing was usually ten head of cattle, but sometimes more was levied; a girl might be taken in lieu of the cattle, when the king would allow the girl to marry, but would keep the bridewealth; or a girl and a boy might be kept as hostages by the king until the cattle were paid. The king might give one head of cattle to the family of the deceased as compensation; this, however, did not always settle the matter, and a blood feud might start and be continued until the balance of dead was even, often not only families but whole villages becoming involved.[3]

[1] See Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., p. 19.

[2] Lesser hostility between kinship groups within a settlement sometimes prevailed. I recently drove with the Jago of Ogwal Pur from his home in the extreme south of that settlement to his northern boundaries. He insisted that I should drive him back, presumably because he preferred the comfort of a motor car to his own feet, but he gave as a reason that his people were at feud with the Jago Ginam lineage lying just to the north of his own village (an act of homicide had occurred two years before). It may be noted, however, that the villages of these Jago Ginam are not in Ogwal State which is, in a sense, a separate settlement territorially but not politically within the boundaries of Ogwal Pur. It is doubtful whether a feud between these people would be long sustained.

[3] *Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan*, p. 48. The authors make no reference to the evidence from which these deductions were made. It must be remembered that Seligmans supported the view that the king had absolute power. 'In the old days his word was law....' *The Cult of Nyakang and the Divine Kings of the Shilluk*, Wellcome Report, 1911.

11: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918)1919 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

The natives weave their hair into fantastic shapes. If a person has very fine hair, he puts a few thorns in it to keep off the evil eye. Should the evil eye fall on his hair, his head would break out in sores.

When a person has his body well oiled or covered with some fine ashes, he is very likely to have the evil eye cast on him. To escape that misfortune he takes a cucumber like pod from a wild plant, and takes out the seeds. Some of the seeds are put on the temples, and some on the neck, and others on the tip of the shoulder blade, or the entire fruit may be worn suspended from the neck.

When butter is boiled to clarify it, the work is usually done at night so that the evil eye may not be cast on it.

The Shilluks will not say that they are in good circumstances, lest it be heard by some envious person, and he should cast the evil eye on their possessions. When a rich man is asked in regard to his property, he usually says I have one or two cows, but they are very poor cows.

The parents of a very fine looking child do not like to let people see it for fear someone will cast the evil eye on it, and the parent is very angry when someone comments on the good appearance of the child. Should the child be taken sick, the parents call on the person who made the remark, and demand that he pay the fine required when a person is killed. The accused usually holds out, and a compromise is effected. He brings a sheep, and one of its ears is cut off. The sheep then is a witness against the man, and by doing that, he assumes the responsibility for the child. If it dies, he pays the fine as though he had killed it. Even if the child reaches maturity and dies, the man is responsible and must pay the fine.

Frequently people have hard knots in their flesh. These are really stones that have been put there by someone with the evil eye. The swellings do not disappear.

The Shilluks have a custom that when a person is threshing his grain, they go to beg from him. Sometimes they go in such numbers that the man has very little left for himself, but he does not dare to refuse for fear someone in the party may cast the evil eye on him. He gets even by going to beg from some other person.

They give a few warnings as to conduct when with a person who has the evil eye.

11: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918)1919 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

626 If you walk with a person who has the evil eye, let him walk in front, for if you go in front you give him a good chance to cast the evil eye on you.

When a person with the evil eye begs from you, grant his request, because when he accepts your present his power over you is broken, and he can not injure you. He may regain his power if he comes again and is refused, for if you refuse him, he becomes angry and casts the evil eye on you.

When eating, let the oldest of the party take the food first, so that if the evil eye has fallen on the food he may detect it, and the food can be cleansed.

When eating with a man who has the evil eye, do not eat much or he will kill you.

When you are angry at a certain village, do not enter that village or you will get the evil eye.

Do not speak harshly to a man who has the evil eye, or he will cast the spell on you.

Once a man gave his daughter to the king to be his wife. The girl had the evil eye, and when the king learned that fact, he gave the woman to another man lest she kill his other wives.

At the present time a chief is suffering from the evil eye. The people of another village had stolen his cow. He went to the village in anger, and talked harshly. While there he felt a chill run through his body. He went home, and took sick. His body has sores on it that have come from the evil eye.

The man with the power to cast the evil eye is feared by the people, but he is not feared as much as the evil medicine man. When he causes death, it is usually sudden, though it may be lingering. When a person [764] with the evil eye dies, the people of the village rejoice, though they do not show their joy openly.

The possessors of the evil eye are deceived even as the people who fear them. They go through life apart from their fellow men in many respects. They believe in their own evil powers, and while their claims sound childish to us, yet we must consider the fact that the history of the English speaking world reveals the fact that our ancestors were afraid of witches, even after they had reached a much greater development than the Shilluk has attained.

15: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1926 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

484 562 624 future expeditions of the same party she will be chief. In the village she has the right to judge cases that are strictly between women.

431 425 484 626 [536 513] A man may refuse to give an ox, making the excuse that he has nothing to give. Then the women will mutter, saying, "He kills us by making us stand in the hot sun." They seem to think he is cheating them. The man's wife may intercede on their behalf. She will put on her husband's cloth, put a rek about her neck, anoints her body with oil, and then takes the chief's spear, and dances among the women. For such a display the chief will usually relent, and tell his young men to bring out the ox. He may be very churlish, and refuse to give them what they desire. They depart, muttering curses on him and his family. If in a short time sickness should occur in his family it is attributed to the ill-will of these women. He sends a messenger to call them. They come and get the ox. He then tells them of the sickness in his family, and the women order ashes to be brought. The women fill their hands with the ashes. They then pray after this manner, "You are God. We were refused an ox by this chief. He now has sickness. We are no longer angry at him. Permit him to escape." Next they spit on the ashes they hold in their hands, and then sprinkle them all over the members of his household. The women then depart, and the patient recovers.

[753 755]

431 425 [788] When the women go to a chief and he gives them an ox, they sprinkle ashes about his house as a blessing. The ox is taken to their village, and it may be killed immediately, though it is more likely to be kept for a time. When the animal is killed the brisket is given to the old men of the village. The old women take the rump, and the younger women divide the remainder of the meat.

425 556 431 [533] A man is glad to have the women come to beg from him, even when he refuses to give them what they desire. It is a great compliment to have the women come, as it shows that his fame has spread abroad as a rich and generous man. Then, too, the ceremony is such as to feed the vanity of the man singled out for the honour. The women usually rush up to the house shouting and singing his praises. They sing songs about his bravery, and tell of his virtues, but the chorus of their song usually is: "Brother, lead out that ox."

426 431 After a chief has given an ox, the women go away saying that he is a fine man, and a great chief. The women seem to demand a great deal. Once, in a case observed, the ox was given. The women did not watch

15: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1926 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

735 241 fills the gourds belonging to the women. If the basket is not sufficient to fill all the gourds, and if the man is of a good disposition, he brings out enough more grain to fill them all. If the man is churlish he will say, "I have given you enough" and will refuse to give them any more than the one basket full. Sometimes a man will say, "Why do you make sport of me by coming here to beg? See, my grain is very little indeed." That is the line the man takes when he refuses altogether to give grain to the women.

If the women are pleased with the amount of grain that has been 788 735 241 given them, they will bless the owner of the threshing floor. Each woman takes a few grains of the grain that has been given her, and sprinkles it on the threshing floor. As she sprinkles the grain she says, "I return you yours, I eat, and am satisfied." After such a blessing his crop the next year should be very abundant. Often the recipient will say, "I am a woman belonging to God. I am happy, because you have given to me, now I bless you."

425 556 It is an honour to have the women come to a man's floor to beg, as it implies that he is a rich man, and can supply them. However, it is often a hardship, and many of them can ill afford the grain they give away to the women. One man said that one year all the grain he raised was given to the women who begged from him, and the only way he got food for his family was by his wife's going out to other threshing floors, and begging from the owners of the floors. It is not unusual for a woman to go to a village at some distance and beg from all the men in the village. She may return with ten or more baskets of grain. Sometimes she is refused the grain that she seeks. The man who refuses to give from his [626] threshing floor is considered a very mean man, and to make a good showing, they give more than they can afford.

Men sometimes go to the threshing floors to beg, but in that case the procedure is different. The man who begs gets a basket and, unbidden, helps carry the grain to the village. At the end of the threshing the owner is supposed to give him a basket of grain, but often he is given less than that. Both sides profit. The beggars have a picnic, and the man from whom they beg is highly honoured.

CHAPTER 5.

Customary Law.

Property.

Since the *Kwar* entire has been split into lineages within the various settlements the ties of clan have become weaker and now operate practically only within the settlement. *Puri passu* with this slackening of the ties of the clan has occurred a change in the ownership of cattle[20]. Possibly the clan used to own cattle in a communal herd from which were disbursed cattle in return for wives from another clan. At present the cattle of each hamlet are kept rigidly apart and not even within the hamlet are they communally owned. The *gol* leader alone owns cattle and he alone, as has already been described, can dispose of them. He alone allots cattle as bride wealth for unmarried male members of his *gol* and receives cattle paid to the *gol*, whether as marriage price or as compensatory payment for a wrong.

It is not perhaps too fanciful to compare his position with that of a trustee towards beneficiaries (who are the members of his *gol*). He is the sole legal owner and can, legally, dispose of them as he chooses. He holds them in fact however subject to a trust which equity will enforce. The terms of the trust are that all cattle shall be applied solely towards the marriages of male members of the *gol* in order of their seniority, that no cattle shall be sold except for the purchase of grain in time of famine, and that the *gol* leader shall not himself marry a second time unless there is no unmarried male member of the *gol* of marriageable age. Any compensatory payment becoming due from the *gol* on account of a wrong should take precedence over any other payment. A breach of these "terms of trust" would be universally censured but would probably not be interfered with by the courts, which tend conveniently to hold that a *gol* leader has full and sole right as to disposal.

It is interesting that where a compensatory payment for killing is due the net is cast wider and not only the entire lineage but even members of other lineages of the same clan may be required to contribute.

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20. Where "cattle" is used in this chapter it may be taken to extend also to goats.

17: Pumphrey G-5 (1934-1938) 1941
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APPENDIX V.

THE CHARACTER OF THE SHILLUK AND SOME OF THEIR CONVENTIONS.

177 186 The most striking Shilluk characteristic is pride of race, from which most other features of their character spring. Their intense conservatism, for example, results from a conviction that everything not Shilluk in origin is inevitably bad. Their much complained of insolence results from their belief that they are every bit as good as the foreigner and just a little better because he has that great initial handicap of not being a Shilluk. It is remarkable that so few Shilluk can understand Arabic considering that no Shilluk village is more than thirty miles from either Tonga, Malakal, Kodok or Kaka, where Arabic is spoken and that from early times their contact with the north has been incessant if not always of the happiest. The *Reth's* chief policeman, an intelligent man who acts as his agent in Malakal and is constantly in attendance at the office, can speak no Arabic.

177 153 Nor is the cause simply lack of intelligence and adaptability. When a Shilluk leaves the tribe and becomes, for example, a Medical Assistant in Malakal or Tonga he dresses in western fashion because otherwise he would be laughed at. Likewise in such circumstances his children will wear seamed garments like the children of the town people. But as soon as he goes back to his village, whether on leave or retirement, he at once resumes the traditional tribal dress. Those who have had an opportunity to compare their intelligence with that of the Dinka, Nuer and northern Sudanese say that they are slightly more *intelligent than the Nuer or the Dinka and about equal in ability to the* Northerner. Certainly the Shilluk who know the English language speak it well, and it cannot be said that they are bad linguists in face of such examples as that of a notorious *Kwenyiroth of* medical connexion who speaks English, Arabic, Dinka, Nuer and Anuak with great fluency and gets along adequately in Murle. Pure conservatism and the fact that all local merchants speak Shilluk accounts for the almost non-existent progress made by the Arabic language in a century of contact.

181 Disobedience, insubordination and insolence are according to many the chief Shilluk vices. The first two, although no doubt very

18: Howell E-5 (1937) 1941 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

daughtered at the *Nyid*. This name is shouted when entering battle, though there are other war-cries associated with each age-set.

Among the Shilluk there are no elaborate and prolonged *rites de passage* through which the youths acquire manhood status and there are no separate ceremonies associated with their recruitment to an age-set. The final act of initiation is participation in a *Coug Bul*, or dance, and the preparations required to do so. The *Coug Bul* is purely a social dance which is arranged from time to time by permission of the *Jago* of the settlement and has no basic religious significance associated with change of status or with age-sets. It is not in itself a ceremony of initiation. To the young boy, then, to dance for the first time is merely a qualificatory rite by which he is recognised in his adult status—a symbol of reintegration to the community after a short period of segregation. Previous to his first dance, he is subject to certain restrictions. He may not fight with spears, nor take part in large-scale warfare or extra-tribal raids. He may not take part in any dances save in the moonlight festivities held by young people only. Further he is not allowed to wear certain kinds of clothing and ornaments, notably large necklaces of giraffe-hair, ostrich-egg beads, and cat skins and he may not adorn his hair with mud. A breach of conduct would be met with bitter ridicule, particularly by the girls, and no youth would dare to disregard the warning of his elders. All these restrictions and many more are removed at the time of the first *Coug Bul* attended by the initiate and indeed are noticably broken at the ceremony itself. The initiates wear the forbidden ornaments and carry spears.

Normally three or four boys from the same settlement are initiated *together, but several of such batches may undergo the transitional rites in one year*. Participation in his first *Coug* usually occurs when the boy is from fourteen to sixteen, but a youth may undergo the rites at an earlier age, if his father is dead and it is necessary to accelerate his change of status so that he can represent his family—especially if he has no elder brothers. When a youth has obtained his father's permission to undergo initiation, he acquires the necessary ostrich-egg beads and cat-skin and takes these to a man who is appointed his sponsor. The qualification for such a tutorial position is apparently popularity

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944) 1946
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of the new *reth* would follow still later. It was thought that the time of the early-maturing grain was the time to hold it. But the *reth*-elect and responsible advisers seemed to think it should be got over quickly: maybe the general quickening tempo of life had something to do with it. It may, and we think this more likely, be due to a desire to get all the ceremonial over without undue delay. For the *reth* had been elected without a fight, and the Shilluk were so pleased that he had been chosen without violence, or the taint of being a government nominee, that they wanted the period of uncertainty cut down as far as possible.

The attendance at the funeral dance was said to be a reflexion on the prestige and the popularity of the late *reth*. This would be an interesting gage, for the last time, of the esteem in which Fafiti had been held by his people to the end. His prestige had gone through various vicissitudes. He had from the beginning suffered from being a government nominee, and the opposition of the southern Shilluk to his appointment, muted by government action, prevented his obtaining a willing and personal ascendancy over them for many years. As soon as his authority was complete, there followed a period of famine in the early 30's and the attempt by Nyawelo the son of *reth* Kur to assassinate him. This attempt would probably have been successful but for government intervention.

Again in 1936, Fafiti became ill, and the future for the Shilluk was once more clouded. He recovered however, and during his last years his influence throughout the Shilluk country was great, and he was held in high esteem by all his subjects.

Near the time of the funeral wake, the Shilluk chiefs and with their men began to collect bulls for driving to Golbainy to be slaughtered for the dance. There was no compulsion on anyone to do this, but public opinion required that those who could, should help according to their means. On the whole the pressure of public opinion was more insistent upon those who lived near than upon those who lived further away.

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
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and that one of the tins containing ninety piastres (about 18*s*.) had been stolen. The District Chief was called and held solemn court on the verandah of the house. He, however, could not discover the thief and therefore gave judgment that the owner of the box was responsible for the safety of the money entrusted to him and that he was to refund the missing money and to be held in custody until he did so. This seemed rather unfair on Henry, the owner of the box, since he had gained nothing from acting as banker to the rest, yet unless the thief was found there was nothing that we could do about the matter and it seemed to be closed. Two days later we were surprised to learn that one of the boys had owned up to the theft and had refunded the money. We were pleased, too, because we thought that although the boy had acted meanly in stealing his companion's savings, at least he had been man enough to come forward to save Henry from having to pay the penalty for the theft. We were speedily disillusioned as to his motive for confessing; the other boys knew perfectly well that Henry was innocent of taking the money, and they had a very strong idea who had. Accordingly they subscribed to buy a sheep which was given to the local witch doctor as a fee for finding the thief. The jal yath let it be known that he would sacrifice the sheep at a certain hour, and the moment the animal died so would the culprit; the latter had not the courage to defy the curse but promptly confessed his guilt.

When an animal is slain in sacrifice, great importance is attached to the position in which it falls. If the animal is a bull, it is not usually slain outright, but wounded by a spear thrust and allowed free. If it should wander towards the river or towards the shrine before it dies, that is taken as a sign that the sacrifice is acceptable to Nyikang. So, too, is it taken as a good omen if the beast in collapsing falls on its left side; if it should fall on its right side then the portents are unfavourable, and should it fall neither to right nor left but simply crumple up and fall forward with forefeet doubled beneath it, that would presage some terrible disaster. The actual spearing of the victim is generally done by

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
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fend for himself during the intervening months, and he spends the time drinking bowls of beer and smoking pipes of rank tobacco with his cronies, discussing the many complexities of women and particularly that formidable mother-in-law of his whom he may never visit, may never even meet, even going to the length of turning aside from her path and averting his head should he chance to see her on the road. He dreams up, too, rosy dreams of his daughter, for it is always a daughter of course, who will be the apple of his eye and the pride of his life during her childhood and who will bring in many heads of fat cattle when she becomes of marriageable age.

On the day of the birth, a custom, of interest to all, but fraught with a certain amount of apprehension and anxiety to some, takes place. Before the mother is given her baby to nurse she must name publicly all her former lovers. Failure to do so, it is averred, will result in the death of the child, and should she refuse to confess she would not be given the baby at all, but it would be reared by a foster-mother. It may be that the girl can say with honesty that she has had no pre-nuptial amours, and that up to the time of her marriage she had preserved her virginity intact. Since the general character of such a girl would be fairly well known in her own village, her word would be accepted and she would be given the child. But if perchance the infant should die, it would be taken as a sign that she had lied. Unfortunately such paragons of virtue among Shilluk maidenhood are rather rare, and the term 'virgin' applied to a nubile girl has something of an unmeaning character, useful only in distinguishing her from her married sisters. Nobody then is in the least shocked or surprised when the girl recites a number of names of men with whom she has been before her marriage.

The men thus accused may either admit the charge or indignantly deny it. If a man admits his transgression he must pay the outraged husband three sheep or goats, or, if he is the father of the child just born, three cows. If he denies the accusation he undergoes a variation of 'trial by